All “should” statements must be deducible from “is” statements about the natural world. Morality cannot be based on a priori reasoning because only physical facts exist. **Papineau 07** writes[[1]](#footnote-1)

In the middle of the nineteenth century the conservation of kinetic plus potential energy came to be accepted as a basic principle of physics (Elkana 1974). In itself this does not rule out distinct mental or vital forces, for there is no reason why such forces should not be ‘conservative’, operating in such a way as to compensate losses of kinetic energy by gains in potential energy and vice versa. (The term ‘nervous energy’ is a relic of the widespread late nineteenth-century assumption that mental processes store up a species of potential energy that is then released in action.) However, **the conservation of energy** does **impl[ies] that** any such special forces must be governed by strict deterministic laws: **if** **mental** or vital **forces arose spontaneously,** then **there would be nothing to ensure that they never led to energy increases**. During the course of the twentieth century received scientific opinion became even more restrictive about possible causes of physical effects, and came to reject sui generis mental or vital causes, even of a law-governed and predictable kind. **Detailed** physiological **research**, especially into nerve cells, **gave no indication of any physical effects that cannot be explained in terms of basic physical forces that also occur outside living bodies.** Thus, for example, consider J.J.C. Smart's (1958) thought that we should identify mental states with brain states, for otherwise those mental states would be “nomological danglers” which play no role in the explanation of behaviour. Or take David Lewis's (1966) and David Armstrong's (1968) argument that, since mental states are picked out by their causal roles, and since we know that physical states play these roles, mental states must be identical with those physical states. Again, consider Donald Davidson's (1970) argument that, since the only laws governing behaviour are those connecting behaviour with physical antecedents, mental events can only be causes of behaviour if they are identical with those physical antecedents.

The Naturalistic Fallacy is actually a reason to prefer.

**Teehan and diCarlo 4** writes[[2]](#footnote-2)

The problem with this objection is that it misconstrues the purpose of the historical/ evolutionary approach to ethics, and the nature of ethical deliberation. Dewey’s imaginary criticand Gould, are correct that **this process will not reveal** the “Good”, or **the “Right”** (as those terms are understood in traditional philosophical jargon.) **But this is not the purpose** of such an approach. For Dewey, **we engage in moral inquiry because there is no** clear, **objective** moral **truth** at hand. We investigate in order to better understand the conditions of human valuations and so be better equipped to understand and resolve those dilemmas which we must face. He writes, ‘It might be true that objective history does not create moral values as such, and yet be true that there is no way of settling questions of valid ethical significance in detail apart from historical consideration.’ (23) Dewey believes **moral dilemmas are problematic situations in which there is a question about what to do**. They arise when there is a disjunct between the desires/ interests of an agent and the environing conditions in which one finds oneself. Such situations call for deliberation in order to reach a judgment that “x” is the right/good thing to do. For Dewey, **to claim “x” is “good” is not to commit the naturalistic fallacy** of identifying a natural property with a moral evaluation. **It is to judge that “x” will resolve the problematic situation**. (1925a, 1925b,1929, 1939b) From Dewey’s perspective **the entire situation is composed of natural elements, and so the moral conclusion must follow from naturalistic premises**. But, as should be clear at this point, such conclusions are not violations of Moore’s injunction; nor is Dewey’s approach subject to the Open Question criticism. To say “x resolves the dilemma, but is x good?” is confused. Once we have established that “x” resolves the dilemma to then ask if it is good is either redundant, or it is to ask for further evaluation of the proposed resolution—i.e. it is to ask “does x truly resolve the dilemma?” “does it resolve the dilemma in the short run but create greater long term problems?” “does it resolve the problem by frustrating other significant interests?” etc. These are all fair questions, indeed important questions. They do not imply, however, that there is some fallacy lurking beneath the moral judgment, they merely seek to continue the process of moral inquiry in a meta-ethically and epistemically responsible way. In order to resolve a problematic situation, to make a moral judgment, we need to have a clear grasp of the situation at hand and the possible consequences of various options. Whatever contributes to our understanding of the situation, contributes to our judgment of what we may construe as the good in that situation. As Dewey says, ‘**Whatever modifies the judgment**…**modifies conduct**. To control our judgments of conduct…is in so far forth to direct conduct itself.’ (38) In other words, **whatever contributes to that** moral judgment **has normative and not merely descriptive significance. Evolutionary studies** clearly **can make such a contribution.** This is not to imply that evolution will have something to offer each dilemma; our moral experience is too complicated to make any such generalized claim. The point is that evolutionary studies, by helping to uncover the workings of human emotions and cognition provide a wealth of resources that can inform, in a practical way, our moral deliberations. Philosophers/ethicists can no longer turn a blind eye to the evolutionary sciences and related disciplines uncovering relevant information regarding human nature. We believe that the attribution of such information to the field of ethics is a clearly defined epistemically responsible method for framing ethical concepts. **So,** in conclusion, rather than excluding evolutionary considerations from ethics **the Naturalistic Fallacy actually opens up space for evolution to contribute to** moral **philosophy**. The deeper lesson of the Naturalistic Fallacy is that ethics is not about identifying pre-existing moral definitions. It is, instead, an ongoing process of deliberation concerning what is right/good to do. Given this, any discipline which contributes to an understanding of the human condition, contributes to this process. Evolutionary studies aspire to offer insights into the physical, psychological and social aspects of human existence and, to the degree that these insights are valid, may prove invaluable to our moral thinking. 7

Human beings are biologically oriented to prioritize resource extraction.

**Lazarus 10** writes[[3]](#footnote-3)

Some environmental pollution is, of course, unavoidable. Basic human life requires the consumption of the surrounding natural environment. **While the First Law** of Thermodynamics **provides for** the **conservation of energy** (and classical physics for the conservation Of mass),16 **the Second Law provides for** the inevitable increases in **entropy** that result from human activity. The term "entropy" refers to the degree of disorder in a system. For instance, as energy is transformed from one form to another, some energy is lost as heat; as the energy decreases, the disorder in the system, and hence the entropy, increases. Natural **resource destruction** and environmental contamination **is** a form of **entropy. Disorder in the ecosystem is increased** when common resources such as air and water are polluted. Disorder is likewise increased whenever complex natural resources are broken down into smaller parts. In consuming natural resources to provide the basic necessities of energy, food, shelter, and clothing, humankind necessarily increases entropy in parts of the ecosystem in the form of polluted global resources and destroyed natural resources. **Fundamental human biological processes compel it. Human life depends**, as life does in many animals, **on** a series of **chemical reactions** within the cells of the human body **capable of breaking down** complex chemical **compounds such as glucose into** its component parts of **carbon dioxide and water.**19 The technical name of the necessary biochemical process for the breakdown of glucose is carbohydrate catabolism, which itself consists of three major stages: glycosis, citric acid cycle (known as the "Krebs cycle") and phosphorylation.20 For the purposes of this essay, however, what is important for the nonscientific reader to understand is how these many biochemical processes ultimately depend on the breaking down of more complex and ordered chemical compounds into less complex and more disordered chemical elements. Some natural resource destruction and environmental pollution are necessarily implicated by such processes. **As energy is transformed from one form to another,** natural **resources are consumed and contamination** of existing natural resources **results. To the extent**, moreover, **that it is human nature to seek to survive, it is human nature to** undertake activities that **cause** such natural **resource destruction** and environmental pollution. That central threshold proposition should be noncontroversial.

Resource extraction is key to natural reproductive processes. **Gorelik et al 12** writes[[4]](#footnote-4)

Not so obvious (except to students of evolutionary biology) is the second goal that the **acquisition of resources fostered**: **the chance to acquire a mate**—a resource in itself**.** Resources needed to fulfill this goal are numerous and vary across time and place. **Examples of such resources are** territory, allies, social dominance, status, weaponry, **precious natural** or human-made **objects** such as diamonds, body decorations and accessories, and currency. **The reason that organisms compete for resources** that are seemingly inessential for survival **is** attributable to sexual selection, **a concept from evolutionary biology which posits that survival is not the only hurdle that organisms must surmount to reproduce; they must also** defeat their reproductive rivals and **attract members of the other sex.** Defeating rivals often entails the evolution of traits supporting physical strength and social dominance (which may explain why men are, on average, larger and more violent than women; (Buss & Shackelford, 1997; Kolbert & Crothers, 2003). Such traits may also be considered attractive by members of the other sex. Thus, although human violence is mostly perpetrated by young men against other young men, the fact that many women find dominant and aggressive men attractive suggests that no one sex is to blame for the evolution of violent behavior in our species.

1. David Papineau, “Naturalism,” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2007 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. John Teehan (Hofstra University) and Christopher diCarlo (University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Faculty of Social Sciences). “On the Naturalistic Fallacy: A Conceptual Basis for Evolutionary Ethics.” Evolutionary Psychology. 2004. http://www.epjournal.net/wp-content/uploads/ep023246.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Richard J. Lazarus (prof of law at Georgetown University Law Center). “Human Nature, the Laws of Nature, and the Nature of Environmental Law” 24 VA. ENVTL. L.J. 231-261, January 2010 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Gregory Gorelik (Florida Atlantic University), Todd K. Shackelford and Viviana A. Weekes-Shackelford (Oakland University). “Human Violence and Evolutionary Consciousness.” *Review of General Psychology*. March 2012. http://www.toddkshackelford.com/downloads/Gorelik-Shackelford-Weekes-Shackelford-RGP.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-4)